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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 005592

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IN](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: SRINAGAR BOMBING MERITS PUBLIC USG RESPONSE

Classified By: Charge Robert O. Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (U) This is an action request. Please see para 7.

2. (C) Summary: A powerful car bomb possibly detonated by a suicide bomber killed at least 3 security personnel and two unidentified persons (probably including the terrorist) outside of a school today in Srinagar. Police sources tell us that terrorists' capability in Kashmir remains strong, infiltration efforts are surging, and the terrorists have shifted their targeting to "quality, not quantity." The GOI is playing down the significance of the rise in infiltration to avoid disrupting the Indo-Pak peace process. Post recommends that Department condemn the bombings, especially as it occurred during PM Manmohan Singh's stay in Washington. End Summary.

Blast Kills 5, Injures 17  
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3. (SBU) An explosives-laden Maruti car exploded near the high-security Church Lane Road (where several state ministers live) in Srinagar on July 20 at approximately 9 a.m. local time. The explosion took place near the residence of the Chief Justice of J&K, and outside the Burnhall School, a Christian missionary school whose student population is mostly Muslim. The car bomb exploded next to a passing Army truck, killing at least three soldiers and two others, one of whom may be the suicide bomber.

4. (C) The Director General of Kashmir Police confirmed the death toll, and said an additional 11 people were injured, but there were no injuries at the school. Later media reports raised the number of wounded to 17. Based on the strength of the blast, police assume that the explosive was RDX. The Inspector General of Police informed us that the car rammed the Army truck before exploding, suggesting that one of the unidentified dead persons was a suicide bomber. There had been no claim of responsibility as of 10 a.m. local time.

5. (C) The DG also told us that infiltration across the LOC has continued "unabated," confirming a July 19 Army press statement disclosing a surge in infiltration attempts in the past ten days. While the Army stated that it is prepared to thwart these attempts, terrorist capability in the valley remains strong, the DG said, telling us that one terrorist shot by security forces on July 18 was carrying 180 sticks of dynamite wrapped in Pakistani newspapers. The DG told us that terrorists have been selecting high-profile targets including state ministers in a strategy of "quality, not quantity."

Comment: Kashmiris Sick of Terrorism  
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6. (C) The rise in terrorist infiltration across the LOC has been widely noted and leads to a growing perception here that Pakistan is reneging on its commitment to check cross-border terrorism. The Army, however, has played down the significance of the surge, attributing it to the timing of snow melt in the mountain passes, and has claimed that the incidents will not disrupt the ongoing peace process. Army Chief of Staff JJ Singh asserted in a July 19 briefing that "it would not be fair" to blame the Pakistan Army for the current round of infiltration, and the GOI, at least for now, is going out of its way to avoid pointing fingers at Pakistan, reflecting concern this could undermine political support for the peace process. The BJP has been less restrained, responding to the July 20 attack by accusing the UPA of being "soft towards terrorism," and promising to question the Congress-led government's record on terrorism in the upcoming Parliament session. In Srinagar, the bombed street had reopened by noon local time, and city life is back to normal. Srinagar interlocutors have told us that the terrorists will claim responsibility this time because they hit their target (soldiers), unlike previous unclaimed blasts that have killed only civilians. The Kashmiri people are sick of terrorism and want to return to a normal life.

Action Request  
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17. (C) The Prime Minister's speeches in Washington highlighted the threat that India continues to face from terrorists and appealed for broader resistance to all manifestations of terrorism. Post recommends that Department respond to this latest terrorist act, which put schoolchildren at risk, with a strong public condemnation.  
BLAKE